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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









**LIFE**

OF

MAJ. JOSEPH HOWARD,

AN

**AMERICAN DWARF.**

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS OF AGE, THIRTY-SIX  
INCHES HIGH, AND SEVENTY-TWO  
POUNDS IN WEIGHT.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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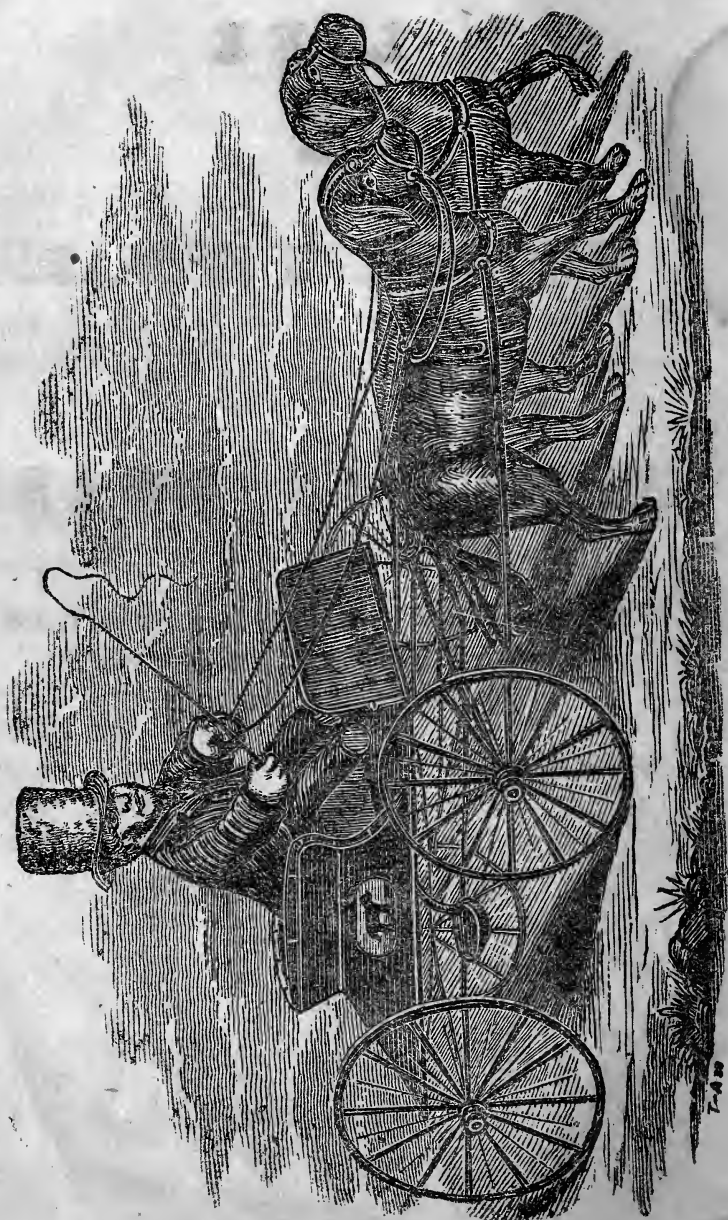
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1855.









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My Grandfather originated in Lynn, in the glorious Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He was of English descent, of respectable family. How near the throne of that Kingdom his blood might be traced, I never took the trouble to inquire ; and, indeed, it never entered my head that the possession of royal blood, much or little, did much for a man : or that one line of ancestry was not as good as another, so far as relations are concerned. Brought up with all the notions of a genuine Yankee, as it respects these matters, and in the behalf, as Dr. Watts has it,

“ It is the mind that makes the man ; ”

I have been easy under the conviction that the blood of my family has not

“ Crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.”

Thomas Howard, my grandfather, came to the then

District of Maine, when the spot now called Bangor was a howling wilderness, and was occupied by the wild savages as their hunting ground. It was about the year 1771 that he first set his foot upon the shores of the Penobscot river, having with him a wife and one child of about one year of age. In company with him were five or six families, immigrating to the then farthest Penobscot, for the purpose of taking up farms in a new country, and to suffer its privations and endure its dangers, if thereby they might win for themselves and their posterity, a comfortable independence, and a home.

As my grandfather was a seafaring man, he was not very particular in the selection of his lot, but set himself down on the first unoccupied place he found, having a view of, and bordering on the river. It turned out, however, that his hap-hazard choice proved as good and pleasant a lot as any in the town: and it was often remarked by strangers, that his farm was in a beautiful location.

Soon after these pilgrims in search of a home, had landed, they set about the erection of a log hut for their residence. My Grandfather had scarcely settled himself and family in his new abode, and ardently anticipating further improvements, when war, that scourge and curse of mankind, broke out, and added to the hardships and difficulties of a new country. To his acquaintance with the sea, my Grandfather added a knowledge of the trade of a Cooper, which was a benefit to him in his new

home, where he was required to bring all his resources of body and of mind, to the support of his family. His pursuits often compelled him to leave his little family to the tender mercies of the Indians. But, on the whole, they proved generally, to be good neighbors.

At the age of seventeen years, my grandfather engaged in public service in the army, in the French and Indian war. He marched through to Quebec, and while on the route an officer rode up, tapping him familiarly on the shoulder, and told him to throw away his luggage, as he was but a mere boy, and nearly exhausted, and assured him that he should have enough at Quebec. He was taken prisoner and carried to Halifax, a prisoner of war, where he remained until the conclusion of peace.

The second child to which my grandmother gave birth, was the first white child born within the limits of Bangor, and she lived to see the little rural spot grow to be a city with its fourteen thousand inhabitants, its numerous dwellings, its churches and other public buildings, its civilization and refinement. She had seen the children of poverty and rags become men of influence and wealth. She had seen the wealthy become poor, and village aristocracies rise and fall—fly and creep. It is only a few years since she passed the portals of death to a bright inheritance in heaven.

I have, when a child, listened with intense interest to the relation of many stories of my grandparents, relative

o their intercourse with the Indians. The following now occurs to my mind :

One room in the house was occupied as a shop, in which my grandfather made kegs for the Indians, and this drew many of them to his house. They would often ask to be allowed to spend the night in the shop, and the request was usually granted.

One night a party of them stopped there, and they became rather merry and noisy, when grandmother stepped in to see what was going on in the camp. She discovered a lusty Sanop, having another one down, his knees upon his shoulders, and one hand twisted into a lock of long hair, left to grow on the top of the head, in order to show fair play in a fight, and the other hand fast hold of his chin, and twisting his head with all his might, making his neck snap and crack at a great rate ; while the suffering Indian was making the most bitter and piercing groans. The floor was covered with molasses and ashes. In one corner sat an old squaw, as calm as a summer morning, regaling herself on rice and molasses, prepared for the party's evening meal. The squaw looked up at grandmother, and said,

“Dat berry good fight, sister.”

An alarm was sounded, and grandfather went in, flourishing his ponderous, rusty sword, and commanded silence and peace, and the fighting ceased.

Grandmother was often left for months with only her little children around her, and no neighbors within call,



her husband being absent at sea. But she was a woman of extraordinary courage, firmness, self reliance and perseverance. She was from Woolwich, in this state, of Irish descent. Her father was a large farmer, and she was well acquainted with farming life, in the barn and field, as well as in the house; and as soon as she could get a little help from the children, she superintended the farm, and caused it to yield the most of the support of the family. She had nine children, and among them only three boys, Thomas, David and John.

Thomas died at sea when a young man. David and John were farmers, and the farm was divided between them, David having one third of it, and John having two thirds; the latter coming under obligations to support his parents, and to set out his sisters on their marriage.

John was the father of the writer, and the subject of this sketch. I was the third child; the two older were girls. I was born on the seventh day of April, A. D. 1815.

My first recollection of any thing worthy of special notice, transpiring in our household, was the marriage of a cousin, who had resided for some time in our family. I was then about four years of age, and I very distinctly recollect the company, the ceremony and the conviviality of the occasion. I did not comprehend the result until the parting scene took place. This cousin was known by me only as a sister, who was ever devoted to my every wish. It was hard to part with one

whose affections had become a part of home, and gilded every joy, and soothed in every sorrow. Her departure to make a new home attractive was to me a hard sacrifice.

Until I was six years of age, I was the youngest of the family, and was petted and privileged as such.

A little steer yoke, which my father had made when only ten years of age, was the reward I received for sleeping in the chamber with the boys. It was to me of surpassing value, and was highly prized for long years afterwards.

One of my greatest pleasures and strongest desires was to ride, and for this I was willing to submit to any inconvenience. When about eight years of age, my love of riding caused me to tax my ingenuity for an indulgence in the pleasure. One Sabbath morning, about this time, old Kate was harnessed into the ample carriage, for the purpose of taking the family to meeting. As usual on such occasions, I was on hand, when the thought popped into my head that here was a chance for a ride. No sooner thought than done, for on finding the coast clear, I at once stowed myself into the wagon box, without stopping to consider of the unfitness of my every day dress, my bare head, and shirt soiled by a week's wear. After a while, and it seemed a long time to me, the family took their seats and drove off to church, without suspecting the precious freight of live stock they had on board. The family were all landed at the meet-

ing house, the horse tied to a post ; and my father, glancing at the carriage to see that all was right, discovered a chisel that I had thrown out of the box, as likely to be in my way. He took the chisel for the purpose of throwing it into the box : but as he lifted the cover of the box, I popped up my head, and came near being marked with the edge of a chisel in one of my eyes ! He started back in astonishment. My hair was uncombed, my shirt unchanged, my dress far from clean, and to crown all, I was well powdered with the dust stirred up in the box, which I had literally stuffed with my body.

"How upon earth came you here?" exclaimed my father.

"I got in to have a ride," I replied, "and now I'll go to meeting."

"No you won't ;" said he, "look at your clothes : see the dirt : you don't look fit. Get back into the box again, and you shall go home the same way you chose to come."

Back into the box I crept, and had another dark ride home.

My absence had occasioned alarm at home, and search had been made for me in every part of the premises, and a messenger was about starting to inform my father of the loss, when the wagon returned, and the lost was found.

My father's house acquired the appellation of "Methodist Hotel," as he continued the practice adopted by his father, of always affording comfortable quarters to

the itinerant ministers of the Methodist church, of which he was a zealous member. Here every Methodist minister and brother was sure to find a ready welcome, and the best the place afforded for refreshment and repose.

Affairs connected with the building of one of the meeting houses, which involved my father in numerous perplexities, cast a shadow over his declining years, and caused him to go sorrowing to his grave.

During a portion of my childhood, the Indians often encamped near my father's dwelling, and I have often spent days with the young Indians, in sliding and other sports. They always treated me as a favorite, and would haul me up the hill in merry glee. At times I would spend an evening with them in their camps, in listening to their stories, and engaging in their social frolics, and their simple pastimes. These occasions have imprinted upon my mind many pleasing associations, which I delight to recall.

My mother died when I was ten years of age. It was the first time death had entered our family, and broken our charmed circle. The sorrow of the sad event whelmed all our hearts in grief and despondency. We were told that one so good, so devoted, and whose life had been filled with a faithful discharge of kindly offices, in promoting the happiness of others, could not but find in the death of the body, a birth of the spirit into a higher and better world, even a heavenly. The ex-

pression of affection which shone in her mild blue eyes, is deeply imprinted on my memory. Her love is cherished in my heart. I can never forget her, nor feel otherwise than that her spirit is near me as a heavenly guardian, and her sweet influence around my heart. The presence of my grandmother in the family, served to lessen greatly the loss of my mother, and to supply in part her watchful eye and attentive ear, her ready hand and willing feet.

In about a year after the death of my mother, a change was wrought in our family, by my father's marrying again, a widow woman of energy, piety and experience, and bringing her to our home, with three of her children. The event was one of joy to us all. The marriage was a happy one, and the two families thus made one, found the happiness of both increased.

We had an old loom standing in one of the chambers, where it had been from my earliest recollection, and this was now given up to us boys, as our mother had a better loom to take its place. This was to us a great treasure, and we took the frame and boarded it, and with broken bricks and moistened clay built a chimney, and thus made us quite an attractive hut, and in it we spent many happy hours in keeping house, and in childish sports. Many hours have I spent in that hut alone, while the other children were at school, for my disability was such that it was not thought necessary that I should undergo the fatigue of making the journey of half a mile to

school, except in the summer time, and pleasant weather, when the boys would haul me in my little wagon. Whether to go to school or not was left to my own choice.

Our school house was situated in a romantic spot, on the bank of the noble Penobscot; and near by was a cove with a fine pebbly shore, and thither we often resorted for sailing in a boat, or upon a slab, or for other sports. The water always seemed pleasant to me in my boyish days. I have often longed for the ability to engage in seafaring life, and to spend my time on the deep blue sea.

One autumn evening a large party of the children of the neighborhood was on a visit to my cousin, and on coming out of the house in a frolicsome mood, we saw at a distance a dim light by the roadside, upon a large stump. Some of the larger boys approached it first, and as we came nearer to it, I discovered the appearance of a face of fire, which gave me a great fright and the way I went home was a caution. In my fright I fancied that the Jack-o-lantern skipped about from stump to stump, and would pursue me forever. It proved, however, to be only a hollow pumpkin, cut in grotesque shapes, and illuminated with the fragment of a tallow candle, placed upon the stump in boyish mischief, to frighten those younger than themselves.

One of our sports was that of training, in imitation of children of a larger growth. In this it was my high privilege to be the drummer, and many afternoons have

I spent, in patriotic ardor, in thumping upon a tin pail for the purpose of extorting martial music. I found it a pursuit of patriotism under difficulties.

In the winter time I had skates fastened to a board, on which I sat, with two sharp picks in my hands, I could make good progress over the smooth ice in the pond near our house. To me the exercise was delightful, and I have often thought that I enjoyed it with quite as good a relish as the boys who could skate in the usual manner.

My sled, too, was peculiar, for I had it so arranged that I could place my head down between the bars, and standing on my head, could steer, by swaying my body upon the one side or the other, as I found it necessary.

In the summer time we had a boat of our own building, in which to sail upon the pond I have mentioned. Here we pursued the Bullfrogs, which we called sharks; and on one occasion, when we had quite a party of girls in our craft, the boat filled, and down we went among the sharks we had pretended so much to dread, but happily to no great depth of water, but well plastered with the soft mud, the girls screaming and the boys shouting. I found my own progress very poorly promoted, considering the great exertions I put forth.

While watching the cattle in the fields, I have often amused myself by singing various little ditties taught me by my grandfather, and among them ~~is~~ appropriate to my case, was the following:

" Little boy blue, blow your horn,  
 The sheep in the meadow, the cows in the corn,  
 Is this the way you tend the sheep,  
 Under the hay cock, fast asleep?  
 See how he stares ! "

In one of my father's lumbering enterprises I took quite an active part, and in which I came near losing my life. While the logs were being rolled from the bank of the river, for the purpose of rafting, one of the logs rolled beyond the reach of the pick-pole, and floated into the rapid current of the river.

An old, dry boat was on the shore, a little way off, and this another boy and myself launched, for the purpose of rescuing the stray log. We overtook it, and I seized it for the purpose of holding it fast to the boat, while the boy should paddle us to the shore. But his strength was insufficient, and we were floating off into the boiling current of the centre of the river, while we thought from the little impression we made upon the log, that it was fast upon a rock. My father saw the peril we were in, and called to us to leave the log and come to the shore. As we struck clear from the log, we noticed, for the first time, that the boat was nearly filled with water, and it was only by the greatest efforts of which we were capable, that we reached the shore before the boat became too much water-logged to bear our slightest tread, while neither of us could swim.

But time rolled on and the sunny season of childhood



was passing away, and those who had formed the happy circle of associates and friends, were one by one going away to the more earnest pursuits of life. I, too, was growing too old to be interested in the amusements of other and childish days. I began to feel that life, even to me, was real and earnest. I therefore devoted my time to reading and study. I tasked myself to read three chapters in the Bible every day, and five chapters every Sabbath. In this way I have read the Bible through in course, three times, each time occupying a year.

I turned my attention to politics, and very eagerly read all the arguments I could find on both sides, and watched the course of State and National legislation, and the measures and policy of their administrations. Political parties have become so mixed and mingled, that the only planks in my platform that are worth preserving, are, the Union of the States, and American Liberty, and genuine Republicanism.

It gave me great satisfaction to make myself useful upon the farm to the extent of my ability. I could watch the cattle feeding and keep them from the unharvested grain: could take the care of the poultry, and perform such like service. In these duties I often had the companionship of my books.

My attention was turned to machinery, and the study gave me great pleasure. I constructed a carriage for my own use, on which I travelled by working with levers.

This, however, always seemed to me very much like working my passage. After a time I saw a carriage propelled by the use of treadles, which at once commended itself to my judgment, and I then resolved that at some time I would be the happy possessor of so desirable an article.

My father at length died, and the whole current of my life was broken up. For a year I remained in the home which had sheltered me for thirty years. I now came in possession of the little patrimony left me by my father. I began to feel the sense of freedom, and the necessity of relying on my own resources. The world began to open before me. I must now think and decide and act for myself. One of my sisters was settled in the country, and I went to board with her, occupying a portion of each summer in visiting my friends.

In the year 1849 I took a journey to Northport, to visit my grandfather on my mother's side. The old gentleman, though about eighty years of age, was hale and hearty, and up to that time had been actively engaged in farming, and swung his scythe with his son, with whom he then was living. I spent a month here very pleasantly; and here I met a lady who so far interested herself in my behalf as to recommend me to the delights of matrimony, and to name an acquaintance of hers whom she thought a fit person to be my life-companion. The idea to me was a novel one. It first appeared rather ludicrous, but the more I pondered upon

the more desirable it seemed ; and at length I felt the truth that it was not good for man to be alone, and the kindness of the great Parent of all in making a helpmeet for man. I began now to feel more sensibly than ever the need of a companion — a wife to share with me life's weal or woe.

On my return to Bangor the cholera was raging in all its malignancy. The burial of the dead was going on rapidly, and without ceremony. Those taken sick at night were sometimes buried in the morning. I remained two days in the city, and then thought it prudent to flee to my sister's home in Bradford. The stage was crowded, and every one seemed to be fleeing from the city as for their lives. I observed that all my fellow passengers had business in the country, and had no thought of fleeing from death or disease — O no! not they, one of them!

I was quite haunted with the idea of at least seeing the lady who had been recommended to me at Northport, and in whom, though known only by reputation, I felt that I had an interest.

Time rolled on, and the following summer I visited my friends in Greenbush, where I spent about a month with a sister. On my return home I was to pass the dwelling of the lady who had occupied so many of my night and my day dreams. I felt a desire and an irrepressible curiosity to see her. Who could tell — perhaps

in her all my ideal fancies of human happiness might be perfected; and yet my own heart would cowardly whisper that perhaps my suit might be rejected. But "faint heart never won fair lady," I repeated to myself, and resolved, at whatever hazard, at least to see her. Her residence was in Orono, and I visited her at her home.

I called at the house and introduced myself, and was introduced to Mrs. Ann Maria ———. In the interview during the afternoon and evening, I became highly pleased with her personal appearance, her intelligence and good sense. The acquaintance thus formed ripened into affectionate and mutual regards; and on the twenty-second of May, 1852, we were united in holy wedlock by Rev. Philip Weaver, in the city of Bangor.

After making a journey among our friends, we boarded for a while in the family of a neighbor, and at length commenced housekeeping, having the furniture and other matters better adapted to our size than we could find in other families, in all of which the members seem to be of inconvenient height. My wife is only eleven inches taller than myself, and we find our new home convenient and happy. My own age is thirty-eight, and the age of my wife is thirty-three years; while my height is thirty-six inches, and that of my wife is forty-seven. I ought, perhaps, to add, that our respective heights we find well adapted to the enjoyment of life,

though my own disability does not permit of my performing that amount of labor, or of being so useful to myself and the world as I could wish.

The proprietors of the Flying Horses at one time engaged with me to spend a week in attendance at their exhibition in Market Hall, in Bangor. It was warm weather, and to save the trouble of getting out my carriage, and wheeling myself home every night, I concluded to camp in the hall.

I was aroused from a comfortable sleep in the first of the night by measured and soft footsteps, and by the clink of a chain. I listened, and the footsteps were near me. I had taken two of the settees, and faced them together, and within the enclosure formed by their railed backs and ends, I had lain myself down to sleep. On hearing the noise, it occurred to me that a large black bear, on exhibition with myself and the Flying Horses, a trio of attraction! was confined in a corner of the Hall, and I at once concluded that he had disengaged himself, and was perambulating the premises. I raised my head, but not an object could I see, for the darkness was impenetrable. I could not see my own hand. But I heard a stealthy step on the floor, and a rustle of paper, and instantly dodged my head, and shrunk to the back of my crib, in the hope that old Bruin would not discover my retreat. I listened intently, and would occasionally hear the chain move, and then a soft step near me. I drew myself into

the smallest possible compass, and ready for a spring, should the bear lay his paw upon me, for I now felt sure that he had slipped his cable, or from some cause had drifted away from his moorings. The darkness was impenetrable, and to me perfectly awful. The public clock told how solemnly and slowly the hours passed on. I was in an agony of suspense, and felt that every instant I was liable to be seized in a death struggle with the huge bear, now loose in the Hall. The hour of twelve was heavily pealed from the church tower, and still no prospect of relief, and I felt that by the morning light I should be the merest skeleton of woe. I was aroused by a loud rapping, and on opening my eyes, found the Hall brilliantly illuminated by the rays of the morning sun pouring in, and the cry of my friends that I must have slept soundly! The dreaded bear was secure in his place, and all my trepidation had arisen from the unexpected and unknown presence of a large tom cat in the Hall.

Many persons, regarding me as a curiosity, have expressed a desire to know something of my history, and to gratify this curiosity, and hoping thereby, innocently and fairly, to tax my brain for a living, which my physical powers might fail to earn, and for which I do not wish to be dependent upon charity, I have written this memoir, and offer it to those who, from curiosity or any worthy motive, may choose to purchase. It will cost them but a

few pence, while the aggregate sum may secure me from want, and the griping hand of poverty.

My mother had two children besides myself, with like peculiarity. They were both girls; one of them died at the age of nineteen, and the other at the age of twenty-two years.

There have been many conjectures and speculations as to the cause of my peculiarity of form, but none of my family were ever able to account for it, and to my parents it was ever a mystery.

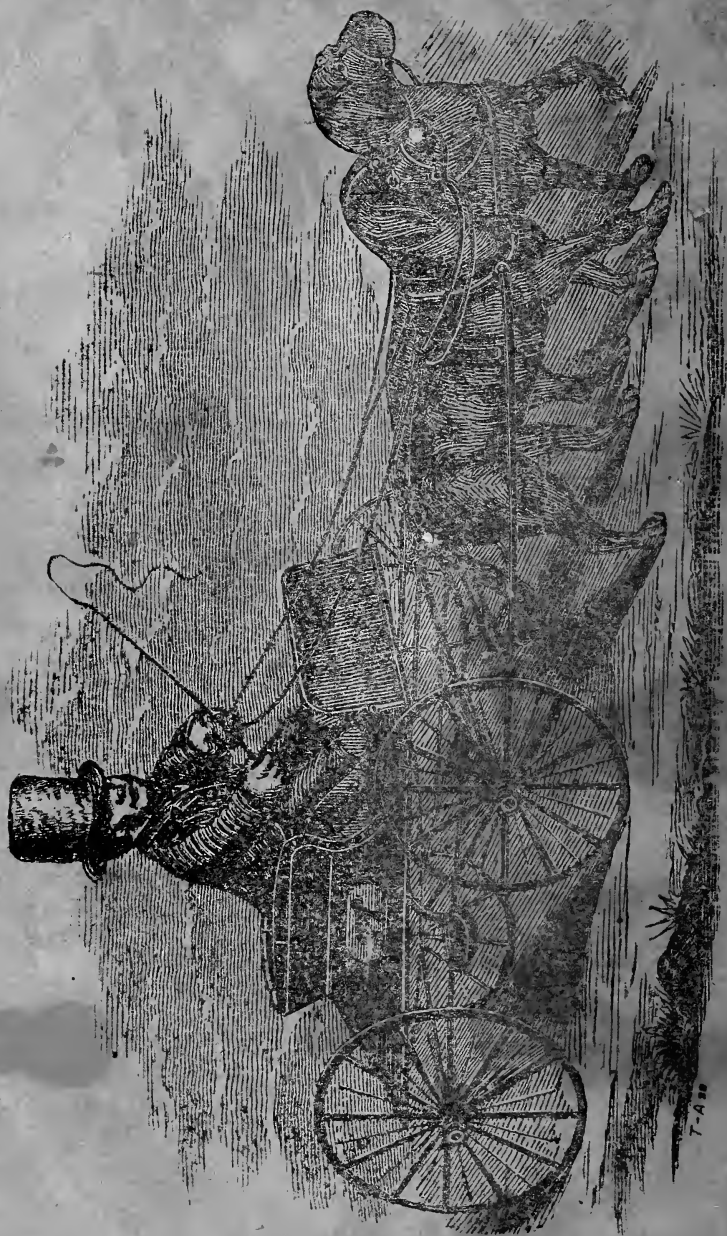
It has been said to me, "Well, my friend, you are very unfortunate." And this sentiment is, probably, generally entertained by those who see me, as similar expressions often greet my ear. From one point of view this may be correct. But every condition, every disability in life, not the result of the transgression of the law of right and purity, has something in it of a compensating character. I may say, then, that I have not yet discovered wherein I am very much more unfortunate than others.

Solomon says that we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. I have always had wherewithal to eat, and to drink, and to wear, and the means of the personal improvement of my mind. How, then, am I unfortunate? There are thousands and tens of thousands, who are having a harder time to get through the world than I have thus far endured. The truly unfortunate are only those who at the final account shall be found morally bankrupt.

In conclusion, permit me to say in the language of the Word of God, in a case somewhat applicable to my own, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, that he was born blind, but that the power of God might be made manifest in him."

















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